

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR (Far East)

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DATE DISTR. 1 SEP 51

SUBJECT 1. Korean Contract Fishermen on Sakhalin Island

NO. OF PAGES 3

2. City Plans of Korsakov and Kholm

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- Beginning in 1946, North Korean fishermen were hired by the Soviets to work in Sakhalin. Announcements were made in villages throughout the country and Soviets came to recruit fishermen. Those recruited were sent to Chongjin (129-19, 41-46), where they were given a physical examination at the Chongjin Foundry. A questionnaire was filled out in which the volunteer gave his name, date, permanent address, present address, and family. The doctor entered on the form the results of his examination, which was superficial in all respects except in checking for venereal disease.
- The recruits were then given boat tickets and contracts to sign. The contract was eight inches by eight inches, had no signatures or chops, and was written in Korean as follows:

Labor Contract for Sakhalin
Fishing Plant

Photo

Registered domicile:

No. _____

Present address:

Name:

Age:

- The worker will receive a daily ration of 750 foods. (sic)
- The existing Soviet labor law will be applied for labor hours and medical treatment.
- The worker will be paid five rubles a day, beginning from the date of this contract.
- The contract will expire two years after the date of signing.
- The term of the contract will be extended if deemed necessary by the authorities.
- An advance of 50 kilograms of rice, 4,000 North Korean won, one suit of cotton work clothes, and one pair of leather shoes will be made to the worker before departure from Korea, but will be deducted from wages in Sakhalin.

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Date: 24-7-78

By: _____

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Next Edition: 1955

Approved For Release 2006/03/01 : CIA-RDP82-00457R008000750009-6

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80-118260

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They were also given a contract in Russian signed by some Soviet official.

3. The trip from Chongjin to Otonari (Korsakov) (142-47, 46-37) took about six days. At Otonari customs officials took away all personal belongings, especially paper, and checked the contracts thoroughly.

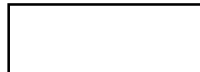
4. After early 1948 there was no rationing on Sakhalin. Since almost everything could be purchased at government stores, there was no private business or black market. Only Soviet ships visited the ports to bring rice, salt, flour, sugar, canned foods and clothing, and load dried and salted fish for Vladivostok. There were shortages in the stores of potatoes and vegetables, but these could be purchased from the local inhabitants at two to three times the government price. Often fishermen grew their own potatoes, radishes, barley, cabbage, and onions. Although there were no restaurants, there were government-owned stores where wine and vodka could be bought and consumed. Representative government prices in October 1949 were as follows:

rice	1 kg	17.50 rubles
flour	1 kg	8.50 rubles
beef	1 kg	22.50 rubles
pork	1 kg	25.00 rubles
potatoes	1 kg	2.00 rubles
socks	1 pair	4.00 rubles
shoes	1 pair	100.00 rubles
eye glasses	1 pair	200.00 rubles

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6. Although many of the fishermen had left Korea to escape the hardships of the Communist regime, they were not politically minded. There was no friction between the Koreans and the Soviets, because the Koreans generally dealt through their interpreter.
7. Controls on Sakhalin were not very strict. Travel could not be undertaken except on Sundays, when fishermen often traveled from Maoka to Honto without permits. One fisherman went to a hospital at Toyohara (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk) (142-44, 46-57) with a pass issued by his superiors. When identification was required, the contract was sufficient. There was no curfew on the island; however, Koreans in Otonari did not go out at night because of robbers. The fisherman who worked in Maoka used to go walking freely at night.
8. In Otonari there were 7,000 Koreans out of a total population of 20,000. About seven ships visited the port each month. There were three hotels for Koreans, three photo shops, three or four radio repair shops, three liquor stores and 20 state-owned commissaries. About 70 percent of the Koreans here were engaged in fishing, 20 percent in work at the railroad carrying lumber, eight percent in shipping, and the rest as barbers, photographers, and hotel managers. Although there was no rationing, each customer was limited to five kilos on each purchase, but he could return several times during one day. A small hill, which was about half a mile northwest of the main street, was a restricted zone. (See Attachment A).

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9. Fishermen also worked at Ichinosang, where the labor contract had to be used as a pass to enter the fishing factory. Fishing boats were checked in and out by the Soviets. There were about 200 Soviets and their families and 107 Koreans and their families at Ichinosang. Three fishermen ran away to another area where pay was higher and were not caught. This often happened and the punishments, if caught, were not severe. An unarmed Soviet couple guarded the factory from 10 p.m. until 8 a.m. The factory had Soviets as manager, assistant manager, two secretaries, and chief of the labor department. The labor supervisor and Korean interpreter was Yi Yung-sup (李英燮).

10. About 1,000 Koreans worked at Honto. A 5,000-ton Soviet ship visited the port twice a month bringing supplies. The fishermen worked from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and had a radio in their dormitory.

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12. This same fisherman was transferred to Naoka as a carrier in the pulp mill. That factory was surrounded by an eight-foot wall and had armed guards. Passes were checked at the gate, and all the laborers over 16 had identification cards, but they were rarely used. The workers bought a radio collectively and were allowed to listen to South Korean broadcasts. On the hill near the pulp factory were 80 guns and 500 soldiers.

13. Most of the Korean fishermen were able to save some money during their two-year contract period. Some of them sent letters to Korea, but there was no mail service to Manchuria. Letters cost 5 rubles for postage and had to be read by the interpreter.

14. Before coming back to Korea, laborers were subjected to the same thorough customs check they had experienced on entering the USSR, and money was changed at the rate of 4 North Korean won for one ruble.

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